



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health
Vessel Sanitation Program

Health Practices on Cruise Ships: Training for Employees Transcript

Overview of the Vessel Sanitation Program

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Vessel Sanitation Program is proud to bring to you the following session: Overview of the Vessel Sanitation Program. While this session is primarily intended for cruise vessels under the jurisdiction of the Vessel Sanitation Program, it may be used by anyone who is interested in this topic. This session should not replace existing interactive training, but should be used as an adjunct to a comprehensive training program.

Program Overview. Mission. The mission of the Vessel Sanitation Program is to protect the health of passengers and crewmembers by minimizing the risk of gastrointestinal illness on cruise ships. To that end, the program assists the cruise ship industry to develop and implement comprehensive sanitation programs.

VSP staff. The Vessel Sanitation Program is comprised of two offices-- one office in Atlanta, Georgia, the location of the CDC headquarters, and the second office is in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In the Atlanta office we have three inspectors, a public health analyst, and an administrative assistant. Additionally, we have one physician under contract who is located in Canada. In the Fort Lauderdale office we have five inspectors and one administrative assistant.

VSP history. From 1970 to 1975 there were routine inspections conducted on all arriving cruise vessels. The World Health Organization's Guide to Ship Sanitation was used in conducting these inspections. In 1975, voluntary compliance to maintain minimum levels of sanitation and to minimize the threat of gastrointestinal illness was implemented. Inspection results were made available to the public at this time. In the 1980s. In 1986 the first overseas consultation on construction was conducted. Around this time, inspections were discontinued, and the cruise industry was encouraged to develop programs of self-inspections using the Vessel Sanitation Inspection Manual. 1987. In compliance with a congressional directive, the VSP program was reestablished with the following components-- unannounced inspections, follow-up inspections, construction consultation, investigation of outbreaks, and in addition, biweekly publication of inspection scores, and inspection results made available upon request. In 1988, a user fee began which supports the Vessel Sanitation Program's budget 100%. In 2002, this cost was determined to be three cents per passenger per day.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health
Vessel Sanitation Program

Structure, fiscal year 2006-2007. From this table we can see the fees charged by the Vessel Sanitation Program to conduct both operational and construction inspections is based on the vessel size or the gross registered tonnage. For the smallest vessel, which are vessels 3,001 tons or less, the fee is \$1,300. For the largest vessels, which are vessels 120,001 tons or greater, the fee is \$15,600.

Vessel Sanitation Program components. The Vessel Sanitation Program conducts inspections on cruise vessels under its jurisdiction. These inspections are conducted twice annually.

The cruise vessels that fall under the jurisdiction of the Vessel Sanitation Program include vessels that carry 13 or more passengers, have an international or foreign itinerary, and visit US ports. In 2005, there were in excess of 150 vessels under the jurisdiction of the Vessel Sanitation Program, and on those cruise vessels we had greater than ten million passengers sailing throughout the year. If we take a look at the slide, we can see that the Vessel Sanitation Program covers vessels which are very small, such as the "Arabella," which carry 49 passengers, and very large vessels, such as the "Freedom of the Seas," which carries 3,600 passengers.

Vessel Sanitation Program Components. Inspections. The Vessel Sanitation Program conducts inspections of vessels which fall under its jurisdiction. These inspections are conducted twice a year in a US port while the vessel is tied up. T

he Vessel Sanitation Program Operations Manual is used to conduct inspections. The current version is August 2005. This manual is based on previous versions of operations manuals, the Food and Drug Administration's FDA Model Food Code 1999, and the World Health Organization's Guide to Ship Sanitation. Inspection scores are available on the Vessel Sanitation Program's Web site, which will be given later on in this presentation.

This slide is an example of the green sheet. Prior to inspection scores being available online, this green sheet was mailed upon request. The green sheet is a listing of all the current inspection scores for vessels that are active within the Vessel Sanitation Program. While we discussed the green sheet on the previous slide, this slide shows a searchable database that's available on the Vessel Sanitation Program's Web site. In this screen, an individual can select a vessel that they're interested in and view the last inspection result, or any inspection result that's available on the database. This slide shows the actual inspection report that was generated as a result of the inspection conducted on the vessel.

This slide, in addition to showing the inspection results, shows the corrective action that the vessel plans on taking to mitigate the deficiencies. Vessel Sanitation Program components. We will now discuss surveillance and outbreak investigations. Surveillance. Every vessel under the Vessel Sanitation Program is required to report all cases of



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health
Vessel Sanitation Program

gastrointestinal illness 24 to 36 prior to arrival in a US port from a foreign port. This includes reports of zero cases. If there are any additional cases after that 24 hour report, a four hour update must be made. When the four hour update is made, it must include all cases and not just the additional cases. In addition, a special report must be made when gastrointestinal illness reaches two percent in passengers or crew. This includes vessels that might be 15 days or less away from the US. Reporting can be made electronically, preferably Web-based reporting, can also be made via email, and the last choices would be fax or phoning in reports.

Vessel Sanitation Program components. Construction. The Vessel Sanitation Program Construction Guidelines is currently under the July 2005 version. Consultation plan review. Prior to construction, the Vessel Sanitation Program conducts plan reviews to ensure that the design of the vessel is in compliance with both the Operational Manual and the Construction Guidelines. The version used is dependent on when the keel of the vessel was laid.

VSP program components, training and consultation. 2007 training dates. The current fiscal year we are under is 2006-2007. These are the dates for that fiscal year. Training program. The Vessel Sanitation Program conducts training in Miami and in Seattle. In Miami there are five sessions per year. In Seattle there is one session. These training sessions run from Wednesday through half a day Friday, and go over the Vessel Sanitation Program manual requirements and various other issues that might be relevant to the cruise industry. International consultation.

The Vessel Sanitation Program conducts international consultation upon request. One such consultation occurred in Egypt for cruise vessels that sailed up and down the Nile river. Another consultation was conducted during the 2004 Olympics in Athens. There were ten to 12 cruise vessels that were acting as floating hotels. The Vessel Sanitation Program assisted in the training and inspection conducted during the Olympics.

This concludes the session Vessel Sanitation Program Overview. Contact VSP. On this slide you can see the address of the VSP, and for further information on the Vessel Sanitation Program, please visit www.cdc.gov/nceh/vsp. To send an email to anyone in the VSP program, please use vsp@cdc.gov.